

SERGEI GURIEV & DANIEL TREISMAN

# SPIN DICTATORS

THE CHANGING FACE  
OF TYRANNY IN  
THE 21ST CENTURY

The Seminar **Communist Worlds / Soviet Worlds** of Sciences Po Centre for History is pleased to welcome **Sergei GURIEV**.

# SPIN DICTATORS AND THE COMMUNIST LEGACY



**Sergei GURIEV**,  
Professor, Sciences Po Provost,  
Senior Member of the IUF.

**COMMUNIST WORLDS  
/ SOVIET WORLDS**  
AUTHORITIES AND VIOLENCE  
IN RUSSIA, USSR, CHINA,  
COMMUNIST EUROPE:  
IDEOLOGIES AND PRACTICES

Thursday, from 5 to 7 pm.

Scientific committee :  
Zoé ALLEN-MERCIER  
(PhD University of Turku /CHSP)  
Sophie COEURÉ (University Paris Cité, ICT)  
Sabine DULLIN (CHSP)  
Axel BELLAICHE  
(PhD University Paris Cité, ICT)  
Isabelle LINAIS (PhD, CHSP)  
Yuqing QIU (PhD, CHSP)  
Any SIDOREVICH (PhD, CHSP)  
Justina SMALKYTE (PhD, CHSP)  
Contact: [sabine.dullin@sciencespo.fr](mailto:sabine.dullin@sciencespo.fr)

**October 06, 2022**, starting at 17:00

Sciences Po Centre for History  
1 place Saint-Thomas-d'Aquin, 75007 Paris  
English session  
(live / online)

« Hitler, Stalin, and Mao ruled through violence, fear, and ideology. But in recent decades a new breed of media-savvy strongmen has been redesigning authoritarian rule for a more sophisticated, globally connected world. In place of overt, mass repression, rulers such as Vladimir Putin, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, and Viktor Orbán control their citizens by distorting information and simulating democratic procedures. Like spin doctors in democracies, they spin the news to engineer support. Uncovering this new brand of authoritarianism, Sergei Guriev and Daniel Treisman explain the rise of such “spin dictators,” describing how they emerge and operate, the new threats they pose, and how democracies should respond.

*Spin Dictators* traces how leaders such as Singapore's Lee Kuan Yew and Peru's Alberto Fujimori pioneered less violent, more covert, and more effective methods of monopolizing power. They cultivated an image of competence, concealed censorship, and used democratic institutions to undermine democracy, all while increasing international engagement for financial and reputational benefits. The book reveals why most of today's authoritarians are spin dictators—and how they differ from the remaining “fear dictators” such as Kim Jong-un and Bashar al-Assad, as well as from masters of high-tech repression like Xi Jinping.

Offering incisive portraits of today's authoritarian leaders, *Spin Dictators* explains some of the great political puzzles of our time—from how dictators can survive in an age of growing modernity to the disturbing convergence and mutual sympathy between dictators and populists like Donald Trump.»

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Events Guide

